

**St. David's Church Exeter and S. Michael's and All Angels,
Mount Dinham, Exeter.**

Newsletter for 18 April 2021 – The Third Sunday of Easter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter for the Third Sunday of Easter. We continue to celebrate the resurrection of Christ and to pray for the renewal of our church and world. We also join in giving thanks for the life of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and in praying for Her Majesty the Queen at this time of loss.

Our annual Parish Meeting (APCM) is coming up shortly on April 28th. Please join us if you can for this important meeting. We hope that this will be a time of mutual encouragement at the end of a difficult year. Please do read the notice below and consider if this is a way in which you could support our parish life. We would be very grateful to hear from anyone interested in standing in the next few days.

Our services today are:

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's (live streamed) with Celebrant, Nigel Guthrie, and preacher, Bill Pattinson

11am Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher, Fr Dominic Cyrus

Thrive is taking a break, starting again on Sunday 25 April. See notice below.

Services in church and online this week

**Tuesday 20 April, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer (from Common Worship). Please join us using this code <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>
Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651**

Wednesday 21 April, 9.30am at St Michael's Mattins followed by 10am Mass in church (also live streamed on St Michael's Facebook page)

Thursday 22 March, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

10.30 Holy Communion at St David's in church

Thursday 22 March, 6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's Church (public worship also streamed to Friends of St Michael's Facebook group)

Friday 23 March, St George's Day, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 25 April

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's with celebrant, Belinda Speed-Andrews and preacher, Ash Leighton Plom

11am Mass at St Michael's with celebrant Nigel Guthrie and preacher, Ash Leighton Plom

4pm Thrive

Thrive on 25th April will be on Songs of Praise, so please do join the Zoom then if you can. You will have seen Thrive publicised here, but maybe you haven't dropped in on a session yet, or maybe you've only been to one or two. Whether you are a regular or have never been, or are somewhere in between, do join the session on 25th at 4pm using the link below to support Songs of Praise, the session, and for a chance to be on TV!

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dlNCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

Covid-19 Safe for Public Worship

Please avoid touching door handles – Thank you.

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

Please wear a face covering in church unless you are exempt.

At St David's we are encouraging people to wear face coverings to come forward to receive Holy Communion and then to consume the host after moving away from the altar rail.

At St Michael's the priest will come to distribute Holy Communion to people in their seats.

Seating will be distanced to approximately 2 metres. Please sit on the seats where service books are placed. Seating is also marked by white labels at St Michael's, with notices on the

Services should be 'no longer than necessary'; and congregational singing is still not permitted indoors.

Toilet facilities will be available and please follow the instructions for use.

Please avoid mingling inside church before or after services.

Please do not attend church if you are feeling ill or are shielding. Although we will do all we can to make the church safe you attend at your own risk.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting – could you join our PCC? Nominations closing soon!

We are planning to hold our APCM online on Wednesday 28th April 2021. Because of the continued uncertainty about meeting inside parishes are holding APCMs by Zoom. Please find the link to join here:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

We will be looking for three new PCC members from St David's and one from St Michael's. Please think about whether you might serve our parish community in this way. The link for the nomination form is here:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/nom-pcc.doc>

We will also be seeking to elect a Churchwarden for the parish and a Chapel warden for St Michael's.

These are essential roles for the health and good running of our parish so please pray for the right people to come forward. Please speak to Nigel or one of our existing church and chapel wardens if you might be willing to stand.

The link for the nomination form is here:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Nomination-of-churchwarden.doc>

We are happy to receive nomination forms by email and can accept these from your personal email account as having been signed. Please send them to me nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com or to our PCC Secretary, Helena Walker, helena.walker@blueyonder.co.uk

Food for vulnerable community housed at the Great Western Hotel

A big thank you for the generous donations of food for our Tuesday packed suppers. The scheme has now ended and we have had a thank you message from St Petrocks which Roger Beer has passed on to me: *'Thank you all so much for the truly incredible energy, dedication and hard work you've poured in to keep this service running consistently for an entire year – it has been an absolute lifeline and had a transformative impact on many of the individuals there. Thank you!'*

Traidcraft Stall & St Michael's Bountiful Table

We are now restarting our regular stalls but please be careful to maintain social distancing and just approach the stalls one at a time. Thank you for your support.

Men's Breakfast

The date of our next virtual breakfast is Saturday 24th April at 9am, by Zoom.

Here is the Zoom link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

The April magazine is in church. Thank you to our hard-working editorial team for another great edition!

Green Team

Wild Flower Planting. Would you like to help with the preparation of the ground for two wild flower areas? We are planning to do this on Saturday 24th April from 10.15am. Do come along and bring a spade, rake or other suitable implement! We have identified two areas to prepare for seeding near the entrances to the churchyard and the vegetation will need to be cleared before seeding.

The Green Team met recently and are planning a morning focussed on the environment, with lunch, for 11th September 2021. Please keep the date!

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Cleaning at St Michael's Church

We would love to recruit some more volunteers to help clean at St Michael's Church, especially in the Chancel and Lady Chapel. Cleaners usually go in every other week and Elizabeth Hughes is usually in church once a fortnight on a Tuesday morning. We would also like to arrange an occasional cleaning party but this will have to wait until restrictions loosen. Please have a word with Stephanie Aplin or Elizabeth Hughes if you would be able to help. Thank you.

Phone Networks

Many of you have appreciated phone calls from other members of the church community. If would like to be phoned by someone and haven't had any contact, or would just like to talk, please let me know at nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com or by ringing me on 01392 660226 or Ash on 07855305519.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Please remember those who have died recently including:

The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, Stella Ugbo

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer this week please pray for our PCC members, Church Committee members, our Church and Chapel Wardens, Treasurers and Secretaries, giving thanks for their work in supporting our church communities.

A Prayer for Easter

**God of glory, by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

Please also pray for:

our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they must make and implement, wisdom to 'build back better' considering the human and environmental costs and benefits;

those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices - giving thanks for their commitment and courage;

those suffering from Covid around the world, especially in India and Brazil;

the people of Myanmar and Hong Kong in their struggles for democracy;

Please give thank for:

the vaccination programme in this country and praying for the equitable distribution of vaccine throughout the world and the Covax programme;

the falling Covid case numbers in this country;

May God bless you and those you care for,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers, Readings and Address for The Third Sunday of Easter, 18 April 2021

Collect

**Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

First Reading – Acts 3: 12-19

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, ‘You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

‘And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,

Gospel Reading - St Luke 24: 36-48

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Address from Bill Pattinson for the Third Sunday of Easter

Resurrection Witnesses, Acts 3:12-19; Luke 24:36-48

**“Make no mistake
if he rose at all
it was as his body;
if the cells’ dissolution did not reverse, the
molecules reknit, the amino acids rekindle
the Church will fall.”**

These words from “Seven Stanzas at Easter” by the 20th century American poet and author, John Updike, express two powerful truths and one understandable doubt. The first truth is that Christ’s resurrection was physical. He did not appear as a vision or a ghost; the resurrection is not metaphorical as if appearing in the annual visit of Spring; it is not as a Spirit in the mouths and eyes and tongues of the apostles or Saints’ lives through the ages; it was as his flesh and bones, his physical body, which is just like ours, that he appeared to his disciples. The second truth is that if this is not accepted the Church is meaningless and it stands on lies and will fall on its untruths. The Easter story of resurrection is at

the epicentre of our faith and beliefs. It is the astonishing good news at the heart of the Christian Gospel. Paul confirms this in his first letter to the Corinthians:

“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.” (1Cor.15:14).

The one understandable doubt is revealed in the line “if he rose at all”. People do not rise from the dead - every right thinking person knows this. When I witness my Christian faith by talking of loving your neighbour, or by praying to my Lord, my unbelieving friends understand. When, or should I say if, I speak about Jesus rising from the dead and his promise of eternal life, that’s when I receive the “you must be kidding me” looks. There’s no life after death.

So how do we see the resurrection? How can we become Easter people, witnesses of the resurrection? What does the resurrection mean to us now? What indeed is the resurrection?

Easter is a season of 50 days, during which time we can consider all these questions. Belief in the resurrection requires faith, which can be open to doubt. Jesus tells us we don’t need a huge or large faith, but that even if your faith is the size of a mustard seed you could uproot a mulberry tree and plant it in the sea. You don’t require great faith rather you require faith in a great God who rose from the dead. During these last ten days, since the Duke of Edinburgh died, I’ve learnt a great deal about him which I didn’t know... and I don’t think I’ll be alone. For instance, I was unaware he was such an avid reader and had a huge library of thousands of books; that by far the greatest number of these books were on ornithology and religion. Archbishop Justin recounted how the Duke had great faith, but he often questioned Bishops and himself on what they preached. Questioning your faith is, I believe, important.

In mum and dad I had two excellent, but very different, role models. Mum had blind faith. No need to question anything. Questions only confuse you more. “You ask too many questions, our Wills”, she would say. “Jesus rose from the dead. In him we also shall have eternal life. That’s what I believe and it brings me great joy.” Dad, on the other hand, loved to discuss the big questions of faith. “Questioning your doubts strengthens your faith”, he would say. Dad had a wonderful, strong faith. He rightly deserved the quotation on the front cover of his Order of Service at his funeral, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

From the day of his resurrection to his ascension, 40 days later, the New Testament recounts twelve resurrection appearances of Jesus, including Paul’s vision on the road to Damascus. We can be assured therefore that there were numerous witnesses to the resurrection. In this morning’s reading we are treated to one such appearance, the third one in Luke’s Gospel. We are told that the

eleven disciples with their companions are talking with Cleopas and the other disciple, whose name we are not told, about Jesus' appearance on the road to Emmaus. Suddenly Jesus himself stands amongst them, offering the conventional Jewish greeting "Shalom" that is "Peace be with you." We read that they were startled and terrified and thought they had seen a ghost. This is not surprising. They had seen Jesus, a human being like themselves, tortured, executed and buried. Are they to believe that he has now been raised to a new life by God? Jesus sees their fears and doubts and shows them his hands and feet, even asks them to touch him to prove he is no ghost, but real flesh and blood. Still the disciples are not fully convinced so Jesus eats a piece of boiled fish in their presence. Surely this is no ghost, no vision but the physical reality of Jesus, who continues to prove his resurrection by opening their minds and telling them all that was written about him in the Scriptures. Before he leaves them he clearly informs the disciples that they are witnesses to these things, commissioning them to go out and tell others.

This is exactly what Peter and John are doing in our first lesson from Acts which Paula has just read. In the name of Jesus, they have just healed a crippled beggar, who was seen daily outside the Temple gate named Beautiful. The people are amazed and flock round the two disciples. Peter addresses the crowd, "You killed the Author of Life whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses." What a wonderful phrase "The Author of Life". Other Biblical versions talk of the "Prince of Life" and "Leader towards Life". The risen Jesus is seen as the channel of God's love, healing and forgiveness. This good news needs to be celebrated. James Tissot, the late 19th Century French painter, did just this in his painting "The Resurrection", which is now in the Brooklyn Museum, where he depicted Christ coming out of the tomb like an explosion, his figure shining white with radiant vitality. Death has no power to hold him.

Like the disciples in that upper room we come to Church this morning with doubts, confusions, fears and misunderstandings. Like the disciples we need conviction of the risen Christ, whom we now encounter in our worship. We are offered explanation in our readings, preaching and prayers, just as Jesus explained the Scriptures to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and in that upper room. Soon we shall share in eating, just as Jesus ate with his disciples. Let us hope that like the disciples our eyes will become open, our hearts burn with recognition of the risen Lord. So then we may exit this morning as witnesses to Christ and his amazing resurrection, as Easter people. "May we who share Christ's body live his risen life." He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Closing Prayer and Blessing

**Living God, your Son made himself known to his disciples
in the breaking of bread:
open the eyes of our faith,
that we may see him in all his redeeming work;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.**

**The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father,
the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon us and remain
with us always. Amen.**

Do join us next week for our services in church and online!